



PASS CHRISTIAN, MS

The

Tricentennial

Volume 1, Issue 15

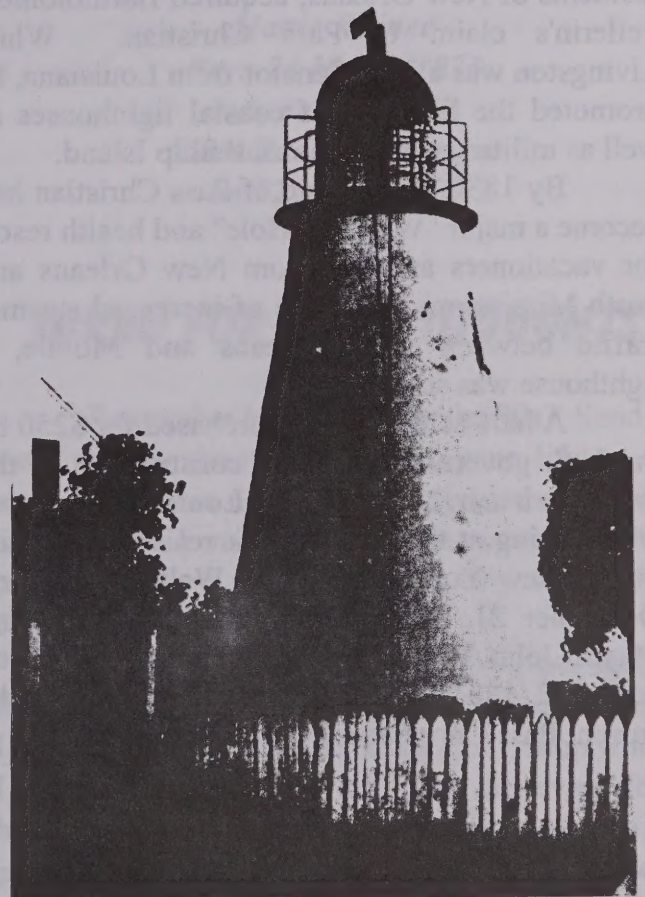
December 24, 1998

Tricentennial Jubilation

Plans are in the offing and arrangement committees are in place -- launching a gala affair for community enthusiasts and heritage lovers of the Pass Christian area. This includes Pass Christian, Henderson Point, the Isles, DeLisle, Vidalia, and Cuevas/Pineville. Mark your calendars for Thursday, January 15, 1999. Starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Community Center on Espy Road, a gala cocktail party - complete with music and hors d'oeuvres - will kick-off our Tricentennial Year.

The theme will be social fun centered around the exhibits presented during the year by local artists and professionals which includes the scale model of the Pass Christian Lighthouse built by Buddy Diboll. A recent addition to the exhibit is the "Lighthouse" painting by Geri Dendis. Other displays will be the bronze bust sculpture of d'Iberville by Michelle Smith and the D'Iberville Stone by Brian Nettles. These heritage art forms have been given to the Tricentennial Committee by their creators. These worthy contributions will be preserved for countless years and will serve as heritage education for future generations and newcomer residents.

Memo: A special keepsake will be presented to paid members of the Tricentennial Committee for their contributions in making 1998 a fruitful planning year. 1999 Events and Projects are the result of the dedication and support from these fine persons.



Pass Christian
Lighthouse
1831 - 1882

Pass Christian Lighthouse 1831 - 1882

The first Lighthouse on the Mississippi mainland was placed at the village of Pass Christian in 1831. Simultaneously, a duplicate tower was built at Cat Island as designed by the same contractor, Winslow Lewis. These towers were built just 20 years following the first lighthouse in the South was erected at the Bayou St. John outlet to Lake Pontchartrain in 1811.

In 1813, Edward and Louisa Livingston, residents of New Orleans, acquired Bartholomew Pellerin's claim to Pass Christian. While Livingston was a U.S. Senator from Louisiana, he promoted the building of coastal lighthouses as well as military fortifications at Ship Island.

By 1830, the village of Pass Christian had become a major "Watering Hole" and health resort for vacationers arriving from New Orleans and north Mississippi. Because of increased steamer traffic between New Orleans and Mobile, a lighthouse was soon needed.

A half-acre site was purchased for \$250 by the U.S. government for the construction of the Pass Christian Lighthouse. Louisa Livingston, while living at their New York residence, signed before New York City Mayor Walter Bowne on December 21, 1830, and Edward signed before Mayor John Van Ness of Washington D.C. on January 3, 1831. The Lighthouse Lot is where the current Pass Christian City Hall now stands.

Lighthouse Alive?

On motion by Alderman Margaret Jean Kalif, seconded by Alderman Vonnie Bodenschatz, carried unanimously, request of Tricentennial Committee for declaration of support for the concept of reconstruction of the Pass Christian Lighthouse. Motion Approved: Tuesday, Dec. 15, 1998. Prior to this request to the City Board of Aldermen, the Tricentennial Committee established a Feasibility Committee to proceed with site and cost investigations.

The Nelson Hotel

The site of the present Hancock Annex Building reportedly had been the Oak Lawn Inn, a hotel operated by a family named Henderson. That hotel burned down sometime prior to 1925.

Later, a two-story garage was built, which in 1925 was renovated to accommodate a two-story brick building that was converted into a 15-room hotel by Andrew J. Nelson.

Although the hotel was dedicated to transient visitors, there were a number of local citizens who established full time residency there. Those persons were called "Steady Roomers."

In the 50s, 60s and early 1970s, the Hotel was owned and operated by Mrs. Margaret McGrath, who continued its mixed-use to include several businesses, such as a chiropractic office, a beauty shop, an antique shop and the Beachcomber Cafe (which closed in 1976).

A predecessor restaurant was Rhyne's Cafe during the early '30s.

With Hurricane Camille's destructive forces in August 1969, all the waterside business were destroyed. Remaining, facing the Gulf on Scenic Drive, were a number of heavily damaged structures. The Nelson Hotel partially re-opened in October 1969 and continued operations until 1976 or 1977. The Hancock Bank acquired the hotel for use by its adjoining Branch banking facility. The Nelson Hotel underwent partial demolition in 1979 and reopened in 1981 as the Hancock Bank Annex. Humorously, the local residents dubbed it the "Half-Nelson."

At its dedication, the former site provided new banking drive-in window bays and a renovated office structure in Greek Revival mode in complimenting the architectural ambiance of the Branch Office and the beauty of Scenic Drive.

The Annex now houses the offices of Fillette Green & Co. Inc.

happy new year

Koerner-Heiderhof

by Gloria Moran

Many of the huge old, moss-draped Live Oak trees which formerly shaded the Live Oak Cemetery in Pass Christian were severely damaged or destroyed in 1969 when Hurricane Camille destroyed the Episcopal Church between the beach and the cemetery, but the cemetery remains one of the most beautiful and picturesque burial places along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. There is something about its appearance -- the occasional massive Celtic cross, the carefully tended, symmetrically laid-out family plots, the Anglo-Saxon names -- Williams, Hancock, and so on -- which immediately stamps it as a bit of transplanted England.

There is, however, one lonely grave in this cemetery whose German inscription has intrigued and puzzled many visitors strolling its neat aisles. The inscription on this small grave, obviously a child's alone, in an individual plot bordering one of the east-west aisles, reads:

**"Hier ruht in Gott
Hattie Körner
gbsen 24 Mars 1873
entrunken b
(M.S.B.L.H.)
den 22 Aug. 1875"**

Hattie Körner's story was told to me by her sister, Mrs. Constance Koerner Moran, my deceased mother-in-law whose father, Henry Körner, came to America as a cabin boy aboard a German ship. From New Orleans, Henry made his way to Bay St. Louis, eventually marrying a German-born girl, Mary Magdalena Heiderhoff. In the early 1870s, while working on the L&N RR bridge on Bay St. Louis he became aware of an opening as lighthouse keeper for the Pass Marianne lighthouse, officially known as Merrill's Shell Beach lighthouse.

Unfortunately, the lighthouse had been freshly whitewashed with white lead paint. The entire family became affected by zinc poisoning, falling into semi-comas and the loss of hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes. However, even before the poisoning, the youngest child, Hattie, had drowned while at the lighthouse. Her frail 2½-year-old body washed ashore near the site of present day Miramar Nursing Lodge in March 1873.

The translated inscription reads:

**"Here rests in God
Hattie Körner
Born 24 March 1873
drowned Merrill's
Shell Bank Lighthouse
on 22 Aug. 1875"**

TOKEN FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

Remember tokens back in the 30s? Send in your stories about a token in your life to be reprinted in this newsletter. Any kind of Token: Street car tokens, slot machine tokens, or the monetary tokens which use to be silver or gold in color with a center hole.

Case in point, I remember going throughout the neighborhood collecting wire clothes hangers. I would exchange them at the cleaning shop where I received a single "silver" token for every four hangers. The denomination was one-tenth of a penny. As a child, I would go to the corner grocery store and buy a single Wing's cigarette, which were sold loose, for five tokens. I then gave the cigarette to my uncle to induce him to tell me a story. At that time, kids could buy cigarettes and pitcher's of beer to take home. However, one didn't dare smoke or drink at that age. Talking about cigarettes -- remember when using a coin operated cigarette machine? You actually got back change which was enclosed in the cellophane wrapping.

Newest Memberships

Merry Christmas to the newest members who have not previously been posted. With gratitude – we thank these supportive persons and organizations who have paid \$15 or more to help defray the costs of this newsletter. Your Membership Certificates are on the way!

All individuals, businesses, and organizations are asked to participate in whatever manner they can to make the Tricentennial Year a success. A special *Commemorative Scroll* denoting all paid members will be issued at our 1999 *Jubilation Social* on January 14th. Please send in your contributions by January 3rd, so that we can include you on the special listing.

Carroll Bellau
Paul & Anne Bode
Bryan & Louise Bohn
Raymond Bollinger
Harry & Lorraine Bowes
Michael Burke, Jr.
Marvin & Shirley Carpenter
Catherine Cason
Jeanne Coker
Ermagene Delony
Bob Fairbank
Joseph & Phyllis Farragut
Morris & Margie Hamilton
Durrie & Jean Hardin
Haywood Hillyer
Herb & Doris Horst
Mrs. O.F. Ingargiola

Edward Jurkowski
M. Bert Keel
Murray & Nan Keel
Carole Markle
Ralph & Ruth Martin
William Matkin
Catherine Myers
Mary Ziegler Norris
Ben & Mary Puckett, Jr.
Jim Sager
William & Gayla Schmidt
Mary E. Schulz
Rebecca A. Smith
Gerald Viator
Shirley DeMetz Wittmann
Pass Christian Isles
Golf Club

happy new year

YES! SIGN ME UP! LET'S ALL KEEP DAYTON BUSY! ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK FOR \$15 OR MORE. Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

(Mail to: Tricentennial/POB 354, PCMS 39571)

Americana Timeline

1492 Columbus
1585 Raleigh at Virginia
1626 Dutch buy Manhattan
1699 D'Iberville Gulf Coast
1702 Mobile's Mardi Gras
1704 Pelican Girls arrive
1729 Natchez massacre
1733 Georgia 13th Colony
1740 George chops cherry tree
1759 British capture Quebec
1763 British West Florida
1773 Boston Tea Party
1775 Paul Revere's Ride
1776 U.S. Independence
1779 Galvez took Gulf Coast
1780 First U.S. Bank
1783 First U.S. Post Office
1787 U.S. Constitution
1793 Cotton Gin
1803 Louisiana Purchase
1814 British burns Wash. D.C.
1814 Battle of Lake Borgne
1815 Battle of New Orleans
1828 Webster's Dictionary
1830 U.S. Railway = 40 miles
1836 Santa Anna took Alamo
1836 Houston took Santa Anna
1839 Baseball
1847 Mormons took Utah
1848 California Gold Rush
1855 Mississippi RR Bridge
1859 First producing oil well, Penn.
1860 Bill Cody's Pony Express
1861 Southern Cessions
1864 Emancipation
1871 Chicago Fire
1875 Tom Sawyer paints fence
1879 Woolworth 5&10
1886 Sears Catalog
1903 Wright flies airplane
1908 Ford's Model T
1913 U.S. Income Tax

Captain Jay Clark

Congratulations!

Captain J.W. Clark was recently inducted into the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy's Hall Of Distinguished Graduates. In 1975, Clark was named Alumnus of the year and had been appointed a member of the Academy's Advisory Board by the Secretary of Commerce. Captain Clark is well known as former president of Delta Steamship Lines, president of the Board of Commissioners for the Port of New Orleans, and a director of the Panama Canal Commission. As Port Director for the Port of Gulfport, he set the course for port diversification during the early 1980s.

Flags Over the Coast

Dayton Robinson not only gave a great presentation of the 11-Flag Tricentennial Collection, but he wrote the book to accompany the flag display. It is complete with color photos of each standard banner. Depicting the Colonization periods, the Independent West Florida Republic, the Confederacy, and the early American flags -- all are disclosed in Dayton's book, "Showing The Colors" for 300 years.

The 14-page booklet is another product produced for the Tricentennial Committee and available for purchase.

If any group is interested in Dayton's Flag Exposition, call him at 452-4543.

Cezanne at the Franco-Fete

Baton Rouge will host a 2nd major display of French art at the Louisiana Arts and Science Center from May 15 through Sept. 6. It will feature the works of Paul Cezanne, Jean-Antoine Constantin, Francois-Marius Granet and others.

Reconciling Words

The Confederacy's only President, Jefferson Davis, called out to the assembly of Southern men assembled at the courthouse oaks on Courthouse Road when the area was the countyseat, Mississippi City in March 1888.

He stated:

**"The past is dead;
Let it bury its dead, its hopes, and its aspirations.**

**"Before you lies the future;
A future full of golden promise,
A future of expanding national glory,
before which all the world shall stand amazed.**

**"Let me beseech you;
To lay aside all rancor,
All bitter sectional feeling,
And to take your places in the ranks
of those who will bring about a consummation devoutly to be wished --
A reunited country."**

In Biloxi, at the *Beauvoir*, the Jefferson Davis Presidential Library and Museum is maintained -- where the true meaning of the man was more than the Civil War, which is all -- that most people know of him.

EVERYONE LOVES MARDI GRAS!

This year, the Pass Christian Mardi Gras Association will be using the theme of the Tricentennial. Adding to the regal fun is the special float promoted by Margie Hamilton and Dana Dedeaux with the blessing of the Tricentennial Committee. A limited number of "riders" are offered the opportunity for a cost of only \$95. There will be Tricentennial Doubloons which will be sold at cost to riders. For more information, contact Margie Hamilton at 452-2435 or Dana Dedeaux at 255-1288.

Festival of the Dead

Following 1835 and the *Trail of Tears*, when the local Choctaw tribes were driven from their lands along Mississippi's Gulf Coast, many settled in the Honey Island swamp along the Pearl River and the rivers and bayous of Hancock County and St. Tammany Parish's northshore.

At the invitation of Choctaw Chief Wellee, Père Adrien Rouquette, had the privilege of witnessing and participating in the May 1859 *Festival of The Dead* on the banks of a northshore bayou emptying into Lake Pontchartrain. The day for the local annual observance was selected by the chief, who notified other Choctaw tribes by sending out young braves as couriers. Attendance at the feast would number about 300 Indians who would come from all neighboring districts.

In the mean time the remaining host members began the many preparations for the festival. Foods had to be secured and prepared and the chief named members of the tribe to handle all the necessary details.

Père Rouquette, named *Chata-Ima* by the natives, means "Choctaw-like." He was the only white man to ever be invited. He described his journey across swollen bayous treading fallen logs for bridges and arrived at his friend Kan-ho-he's lodge where he changed from his black robe to wilderness attire.

It was near two o'clock in the afternoon. The final preparations were being completed. A shed blanketed with leaves covered a large picturesque table laden with flowers and trays of pre-cut meats and yet uncooked foods. Twelve light-footed squaws advanced to halt at pre-marked spots surrounding the shed. They unloaded pine knots from the baskets they carried. Silently the squaws disappeared to returned with the baskets once more filled with their fuel. They kindled their fires and drew out their huge kettles which were hung over the smokey flames. The kettles were filled with water as the twelve would remain

through the evening in cooking the foods.

In front of the shed was a large solitary fire where a woman sat in what became a sort of circle as more women arrived with robes covering their heads. In the circle they chanted lamentations in stifled tones with periods of piercing shrieks and thrilling notes of heartrending woe and anguish for remembrance of the dead.

It was midnight in the moonlit forest before the Banquet was served. The menu was simple; meat, bread and coffee. After the men had eaten their fill, then the squaws came and had their banquet. Père Rouquette reflected that everything was in such a coordinated order that he was reminded of being in a refectory of some monastery with austere monks and nuns.

WILLET'S LANDING -- Lassabe's at DeLisle

A Confederate freight schooner, attempting to break through the Union Blockade, was chased into the Bay of St. Louis. It proceeded up the Wolf River and was docked at the uppermost landing at the Lassabe Shipyard. It was from this place during the Civil War, that the Rebel vessel was dragged overland to Bayou Bernard. In later years, this place became known as "Willet's Landing".

Although the intruding guests were unwelcome, Lassabe guided their boat up the river to a suitable hiding place. He then ordered his axmen to construct a large sled with a cradle to fit the boat. When it was ready, he brought in several teams of oxen, hooked them to the load, and gave the signal to draw the sled from the river. As the axmen cleared a path, the oxen pulled the boat and sled following behind. The huge slide carrying the mounted boat in its cradle, was drug overland to Bayou Bernard where it was put into the water and made ready for the Confederates to sail out through Biloxi Bay. Reportedly, the lead axe-man was a mulatto named John Saucier, who remained faithful to the Lassabes.

Civil War Vignettes

- Upon entering the Civil War, Mississippi was ranked economically as the fifth richest state in the nation. However, in defeat it plummeted to last place.

- The Pass mobilized a brigade size volunteer militia, called the "Dahlgren Guards" commemorating its leader, General C.G. Dahlgren. However, these troops were ordered north leaving the "Pass" defenseless.

- A letter from one "Pass" citizen posted in the New Orleans Picayune stated; "We have visited Camp Dahlgren, where the Mississippi Brigade . . . is at present quartered, and witnessed a grand review of the troops by his excellency Governor Moore of Louisiana. . . . they may be considered the 'fully insured,' fire proof, iron ties of the lake shore. They will make their mark when encountering the foe, or we are no prophet. Whew! as well might man attempt to silence the thunder of the heavens with a pop gun! Chase the wild lightnings with a Mexican mustang! Bid the whirlwind cease, or stay the eruption of Mount Vesuvius with a 'paper blockade!' Hark! was not that thunder?"

- During that invasion, one of the town folk had found himself relentlessly chased into the wooded oak and pines. He slyly hid himself within the trunk of a hollow tree, but the following morning he was not able to extricate himself. Fortunately he was found soon after, but, to free him, the tree had to be cut down.

- During the Union Blockade, the remaining residents of the "Pass" were resilient and expedient in surviving their difficulties. There was plenty of marine life to stave their hunger. Salt was a premium commodity to both the British and the inland natives. The townsfolk learned to dehydrate the Gulf waters for salt residue, which was traded to the inland farmers for vegetables and to the Union troops for shoes and supplies. Every pot, pan, and kettle became a commodity to store the salt extracted from the Gulf waters.

- Another incident of the Blockade was the good Father Leduc of Bay St. Louis, who in providing supplies to the school and the needy community, made

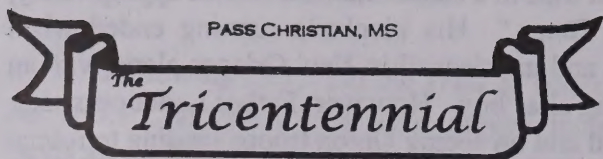
frequent trips in a small schooner named appropriately, "*Hard Times*." His blockade running ended when caught and imprisoned in New Orleans along with an assisting altar boy. However, Father Leduc was later released and on seeing Union troops landing to rescue Federal prisoners as they were about to burn down Bay St. Louis, "the priest advanced toward them while holding aloft a crucifix. The priest pleaded to stop the burning. Embarrassed by the Cross of Christ and impressed by the authority and courage of the unarmed priest, the Yankees, most of whom were Irish Catholics, doffed their hats and withdrew, sparing the town further destruction."

- Another event of interest occurred after the war's end. Those returning Southerners who were deserters or renegades were called "bushwhackers" or "jayhawkers". They pillaged and stole from the Federal Troops as well as the locals. One night as some townsfolk were bringing in supplies loaded in skiffs, a group of bushwhackers attacked. In one of the boats, one man had a wooden leg. In his attempt to thwart an attacker, he stomped his peg leg through the floor board resulting in sinking the skiff and losing all the supplies.

- Following the war, it was customary for adult males of both races to carry weapons. Only a few incidents occurred, however, due to certain characteristics unique to coastal Mississippians. Firstly, there was a small but significant class of black landowners and entrepreneurs who dated back to the 1700's who counseled the remaining black population in limiting strife. Secondly, there were only few white coastians wealthy enough to own slaves. And, lastly, the overall population of blacks was less than twenty five percent. Therefore, violence between the races continued to be minimal.

- It wasn't long before the moods along the Coast became festive once more. In 1867, Pass Christian hosted the first baseball game on the Coast. The *Pass Yahaws* scored 17 to 10 over the Christian Brother's College young athletes.

Remind your Pass Christian friends who are not receiving this newsletter that all they need do is to send their name and address to POB 354, 39571.



PASS CHRISTIAN, MS

POB 354

Pass Christian, MS 39571

Change Service Requested.

Non-Profit Organization

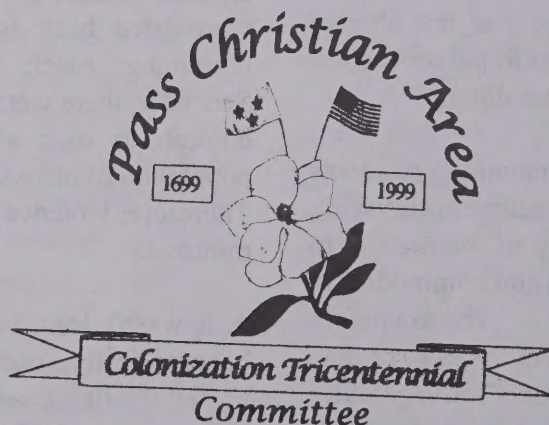
U. S. Postage

PAID

Pass Christian, MS

Permit No. 2

An Invitation



You are cordially invited to attend
The Tricentennial Jubilation
Thursday, January 14, 1999 at 6:00 pm
Espy Road Community Center
Flors d'oeuvres, Music, and Cash Bar
Casual Dress -- Free-will Donation